

Tales of the Revolution and of the People

"A Diary of the Russian Revolution"

JAMES L. HOUGHTLING'S *A Diary of the Russian Revolution* is an unpretentious little book, a simple, direct personal narrative of the first days of the Russian revolution in early spring, 1917. The author was in Petrograd when things were happening. Naturally he did not see them all, but he saw as much as the most alert of his readers could have done, and he makes the reader feel that he was there, too.

There is humor as well as the thrill of the unexpected in Houghtling's story. Absurd stories got sent abroad. It was acknowledged at the American Embassy in Petrograd that correspondents were "sending the worst slush possible to America."

The revolution was the circus, but it did not interfere with the sideshows nor with normal pursuits. As a battle between troops was going on behind barricades on the broad avenue of the Liteiny shoppers strolled down the thoroughfare and came and went in and out of the stores. Houghtling and some other young Americans, whose curiosity led them to get into the thick of many fuses, caused a small debate in the Duma, where it was asserted that the young men's behavior was evidence that the United States had recognized the revolutionary government!

A DIARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. BY JAMES L. HOUGHTLING. Dodd, Mead & Co. \$1.25.

"Miss Amerikanka"

THE impressions of an American girl in Russia, and her reactions to Russia, are set down in *Miss Amerikanka* with a charm and sympathy that brings that country very close to the reader. At this particular time any work which sheds light on the character and personality of a people on whom the attention of the whole world is centred is of peculiar interest.

Miss Gilbreath's book treats of Russia as it was in the early days of the war—but her picture of the Russians is one that will help us better to understand the background and soil of the Russian revolution and its subsequent tragedies.

M. Novinsky, through whose eyes *Miss Amerikanka* is enabled to see the country in its most poignant aspects, says prophetically:

"The Russia you see is the Russia of to-day; what Russia of to-morrow will be no one knows. In time we shall evolve into a great free nation. In time—but what is one man's lifetime in the evolution of a race?"

"For the next hundred years we are going to be the most unhappy people in the world."

Into the writing of *Miss Amerikanka* went an extraordinary degree of understanding and sincerity. There are poetical descriptions of the steppes, of Petrograd and Moscow; and there are flashes of vision that are breath taking. A delicate romance binds the impressions together and brings the courageous American girl into a closer contact with the reader.

MISS AMERIKANKA. By OLIVE GILBREATH. Harper and Brothers. \$1.40.

Russian Experiences

AMONG the season's books on Russia there is none of more significance than Maurice Baring's *A Year in Russia*, and this in spite of the fact that it is the second edition of a collection of letters contributed to the London *Morning Post* in 1906-1907. For the events of that year, in Mr. Baring's estimation, brought about the present conditions in Russia.

The letters, written in an easy and direct style, show well the state of inconceivable demoralization prevalent at the time they were done. Russian prisons were so packed that the following dialogue took



PATRICK MCGILL
Author of "The Brown Brethren."

place one day between a minister and his subordinate:

THE MINISTER: We must let some of the prisoners out.

THE SUBORDINATE: How many?

THE MINISTER: Say 5,000.

THE SUBORDINATE: Why 5,000?

THE MINISTER: A nice even number.

THE SUBORDINATE: But how? Which? How shall we choose them?

THE MINISTER: Let out any 5,000. What does it matter to them? Any 5,000 will be as pleased as any other to be let out.

Ruth Pierce's letters to her mother and father published under the title *Trapped in "Black Russia"* are in contrast very much the work of an amateur. Extremely personal in tone, they are given largely to describing a period of arrest under suspicion of espionage and an interminable wait for passports in company with the writer's husband and a friend. In speaking of the women of Russia she says: "When we left the monastery a group of wounded soldiers were just entering. With them was a woman in a man's uniform. Her hair was curly and short and her chin pointed. Her feet looked ridiculously small in the heavy, high soldier's boots, and in spite of her strut her knees knocked together in an unmistakably feminine manner. But the men treated her quite as one of themselves. One soldier, who had his leg cut off up to the thigh, supported himself by her shoulder."

A YEAR IN RUSSIA. BY MAURICE BARING. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$3.50.

TRAPPED IN "BLACK RUSSIA." BY RUTH PIERCE. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$1.25.

"The Mad Monk of Russia, Iliodor"

THE "life, memories and confessions" of Sergius Trufanoff, or Iliodor, presented in *The Mad Monk of Russia, Iliodor*, is an astonishing mixture of personal vanity, gossip, scandal and intrigue. Iliodor from a student became a fanatical preacher, travelling about Russia and listened to devoutly by millions. He became intimately acquainted with the infamous Rasputin. Iliodor does not conceal his hatred of Rasputin, whom he describes as physically, mentally and morally filthy.

The book says that Rasputin, while drunk, admitted to Madame Trufanoff that he and the Czarina were plotting a separate peace with Germany because they knew that if peace did not come the monarchy would fall. This is a sample of the things with which the book is filled, things that tax the reader's credulity or overtax it. But it is exciting reading.

THE MAD MONK OF RUSSIA, ILIODOR. BY SERGIUS TRUFANOFF (ILIODOR). The Century Company. \$2.

"Taras Bulba"

COINCIDENT almost with the declaration of a Ukrainian peace with Germany, and the offer of the Cossacks to assist Japan in protecting Siberia, comes the publication in Everyman's Library of some of Gogol's best tales.

Born in Little Russia in 1806, with Cos-

sack blood in his veins, Gogol was one of the first Russian writers to protest against the pseudo-classic Russian literature which up to his time had been influenced by foreign models. With true Cossack disregard for restriction and a poet's love of both the joyous and sad songs of Ukraine, he injected into the effete literature of his age the wild, barbaric spirit of his race.

His pictures of the fighting, drunken, religious Cossacks are etched deep and he prefers the picturesque, nomadic, irresponsible Cossacks of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to those who, in the nineteenth century, were trained to maintain the autocracy of the Czars.

Taras Bulba is regarded by some as the finest short work in Russian literature, and the other stories in the book are equally informing as to Russian beliefs and customs.

TARAS BULBA AND OTHER TALES. BY NIKOLAI V. GOGOL. E. P. Dutton & Co. 60 cents.

The Desert Pictured.

NOTHING could bear higher testimony to the literary quality of a book on so unusual a subject as the Colorado Desert than that it should have gone through fifteen editions in seventeen years. To celebrate the steady popularity of John C. Van Dyke's *The Desert* the publishers have profusely illustrated the newest edition with interesting photographs of those waste lands, as well as of the Colorado River, which runs through them.

Undoubtedly the writing was a labor of felicity to the author, for he approaches his theme with awe and reverence, and envelops with poetic imagery the little things that ordinarily would escape a less observing eye.

Perhaps such a book has appealed to recluses not of the physical but the mental sort, for there is a difference. Hermits are physical recluses, while people with poetic imagination are frequently mental recluses. The author writes: "A sensitive feeling for sound or form or color, an impressionable nervous organization, do not belong to the man with the hoe, much less the man with the bow. It is to be feared that they are indicative of some physical degeneration, some decline in bone and muscle, some abnormal development of the emotional nature."

It is in this spirit that the author has done his work, and that to him the desert has become a subject of keen fascination is altogether patent when he says, "The weird solitude, the great silence, the grim desolation are the very things with which the desert wanderer eventually falls in love. The desert is overwhelmingly silent. There is not a sound to be heard, and not a thing moves save the winds and the sky." Yet amid this great waste are plant



MURIEL HINE
Author of "The Best in Life"

and animal life. The palm, the ocotilla, the cactus, the lluvia d'oro, the saltbush and the lichen all manage to thrive in this arid area. Likewise the jackrabbit, the rock squirrel, the prairie dog, the mule deer, the coyote, the mountain lion, the gray wolf, the fox and the reptile all find sustenance in their solitary home. The mesas, the foothills, the Grand Canyon, the long stretches of sand, the ever changing colorful sky—these are the poetic symbols of Nature's mysterious intentions.

In a few places the author has discovered the remains of man's former habitation—the padres whose monasteries have crumbled to the earth and the men of the stone age who have left silent souvenirs of their ancient activity.

It is only in great silences like those of the desert that man feels the pulsation of the stillness tapping upon his eardrums; and who knows but that it is the audible passing of time?

There is not a dull page in the book, and the lambent, rhythmic style raises even the commonplace observations to poetic heights. Books of this kind are always a rare tribute to literature, for they prove conclusively that by the power of words that which is dead can be brought to life. Without poetic imagery this waste place of America would have gone unhonored, unloved and unsung.

THE DESERT. BY JOHN C. VAN DYKE. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.

Ernest Poole's New Book

"THE DARK PEOPLE"

Russia's Crisis

By the author of "The Harbor," etc.

A wholly remarkable and informing book touching on almost every phase of the Russian situation, written out of Mr. Poole's recent experiences in Russia. This is perhaps the first truly intelligent account of the real forces at work in Russia for her ultimate salvation. Vividly written, fearlessly direct, Mr. Poole's story carries a message from a great people.

Ill. \$1.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY,

Publishers,

NEW YORK.

The Philadelphia Record says: "We have been looking for a book from the front, written by a young man whose soul is touched by the deeper meanings of the war."

OVER THERE AND BACK
By Lieut. Joseph S. Smith

For Sale Everywhere.